

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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FM AMEMBJSSY BANGUI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7325

INFO AMEMBASSY PARIS

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BANGUI 1267

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, FR, CT

SUBJECT: BOKASSA BLAMES FRENCH FOR FEBRUARY COUP

1. SUMMARY: ON 6 JULY, ON THE OCCASION OF THE INAUGURATION OF J FRENCH/CAR CIGAR FACTORY, PRESIDENT BOKASSA ACCUSED A FRENCH ARMY OFFICER OF BEING RESPONSIBLE FOR THE 3 FEBRUARY COUP ATTEMPT. THE ENTIRE DIPLOMATIC CORPS WAS PRESENT AT THE TIME AND THE REMARKS WERE CARRIED ON RADIO BANGUI LATER THE SAME DAY, END SUMMARY.

2. BOKASSA BEGAN HIS REMARKS BY SAYING THAT HE HAD NOT INTENDED TO SPEAK ON THE OCCASION OF THE FACTORY INAUGURATION BUT HE WISHED TO COMMENT ON A SUGGESTION MADE EARLIER AT THE CEREMONY THAT HE SHOULD MEET WITH PRESIDENT GISCARD D'ESTAING OF FRANCE TO DISCUSS ECONOMIC COLLABORATION BETWEEN FRANCE AND THE CAR. BOKASSA SAID HE WOULD LIKE TO MEET WITH GISCARD WERE IT NOT FOR TWO FACTORS: HIS PRE-OCCUPATION WITH THE EXTENSIVE ECONOMIC PROGRAM HE WAS ORGANIZING IN THE CAR AND THE PROLIFERATION OF COUPS D'ETAT IN AFRICA. HE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THE LATTER SUBJECT WITH GISCARD, BUT WOULD NOT DO SO AS LONG AS THERE WERE FRENCHMEN WHO WERE NOT LOYAL TO GISCARD WHO WERE COMMITTED TO ORGANIZING COUPS. HE THEN STATED THAT CAPTAIN DUTET

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ATTACHED TO THE FRENCH TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, HAD BEEN RESPONSIBLE FOR THE FEBRUARY 3 ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT. DUTET, HE CHARGED, HAD ORGANIZED CERTAIN DISSIDENT ELEMENTS OF THE CAR ARMY IN ORDER TO PUT AN END TO THE PRESIDENT'S LIFE. BOKASSA DID NOT ELABORATE FURTHER AND SIMULTANEOUSLY WENT OUT ON HIS WAY TO EMPHASIZE HIS CONTINUED FRIENDSHIP FOR FRANCE AND GISCARD.

3. COMMENT: THIS IS THE FIRST TIME BOKASSA HAS EXPLICITLY TIED FRANCE TO THE 3 FEBRUARY INCIDENT. CAPTAIN DUTET, WHO WAS BROUGHT OUT OF RETIREMENT IN FRANCE TO SUPERVISE CONSTRUCTION OF THE PRESIDENTIAL HOTEL AT N'DDLE, WAS QUICKLY EXPELLED FROM THE CAR IN MID-FEBRUARY FOR ALLEGED COMPLICITY IN THE COUP. THIS LATEST OUTBURST APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN ENTIRELY FORTUITOUS AND EVIDENTLY CAUGHT FRENCH VERY MUCH BY SURPRISE. IT DEMONSTRATES HOW CLOSE TO THE SURFACE FEBRUARY EVENTS REMAIN FOR BOKASSA AND IS A USEFUL REMINDER THAT ALLEGED CALDO (AND CIA) INVOLVEMENT COULD STILL BE USED AGAINST US IN THE FUTURE.
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